Volume V, No. 2 ✝✝✝✝✝✝ February 1957

BULLETIN OF THE HISTORY OF DENTISTRY

official monthly publication of
American Academy of the History of Dentistry

ERRATUM

F/ Willoughby D. Miller received an A.B. degree from the University of Michigan in 1875. He studied at the University of Edinburgh and the University of Berlin, 1876-1877. He studied at Pennsylvania College of Dental Surgery 1877-1878 and was graduated from the Dental Department of the University of Pennsylvania in 1879.

THE VALUE OF HISTORY

F/ The following extract from Rudolf Virchow's "Standpoints in Scientific Medicine" (1877) translated by L. J. Rather and printed in entirety in Bulletin of the History of Medicine (30:537-543 Nov.-Dec. 1956) presents very clearly a claim often overlooked by persons who do not appreciate the value of historical study to the health sciences:

True, we were enemies of tradition, but time has justified us. We were not, however, such barbarians that we considered it justifiable, as many do today, to despise or even ignore tradition merely because it is tradition. On the contrary, we were convinced that only historical knowledge is genuine knowledge, that justice toward others is the only counterweight to exaggerated self-esteem, and also that valuable lessons can be drawn from the study of error. We have not forgotten this. As different as that which we worked out was from tradition, yet it was our pride to bring it into connection with the verified part of the old science, and to seek out the sources lying behind us from which the newer point of view has taken origin.

He who has only once through his own efforts tried to trace back the long path trod by his predecessors, who has felt how clear and luminous his own knowledge becomes as he grows aware of the historical circumstances through which it has arisen and discovers the basis of the errors through which even genuine investigators have been misled, who has learned that a kernel of truth sticks in every error, will not place himself with those who despise historical studies. Admittedly, however, history which is satisfied by the parading forth of an array of fragmented and disconnected groups of sentences from all periods for the sake of appearing erudite, and without that genuine insight into the significance of what is said available only in the light of its time with a full understanding of the scientific presuppositions then considered valid, amounts to nothing. We older ones know from our own painful experience well enough how to appreciate this difference, since we are only too well able to estimate the sort of

nonsense that can be ascribed to a man of an earlier era when someone plucks out a few scattered statements and tests his newly acquired wisdom on them.

PURKYNE AND DENTAL SCIENCE

F/ The Bulletin of the Cleveland Medical Library for January is largely given over to the career of the Czech scientist Jan Evangelista Purkyne (1787-1869) as epitomized by Henry J. John.

In the long list of important discoveries in biological science, Purkyne's important contributions to odontology and especially dental histology and embryology might be overlooked. In 1828 Purkyne introduced the method of producing ground sections of teeth for study. With the development of the microscope into a practicable instrument of investigation about 1835, Purkyne, through his two students Rashkow and Fraenkel, developed the embryology of the teeth and the histology of tooth tissues.

The first microscopic demonstration of the existence of cementum on human teeth was made by Fraenkel, and the first illustration of the location of cementum appeared in his thesis.

From the time of Malpighi, the existence of cementum on the teeth of animals was known. Tenon in the middle of the eighteenth century described it in horses' teeth, and Blake about 1800 studied it in the complex molars of elephants. Cuvier coined the term <u>ciment</u> to designate it.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, some anatomist began to suspect that the same tissue existed, occasionally and perhaps as a pathological manifestation, on human teeth. It was a German dentist, Ringelmann, however, who through his macroscopic observation, in 1824, first gave full recognition to cementum as a normal constituent of tooth structure. It remained for Purkyne, through his pupils, to give histologic proof of the third hard tissue of the teeth.

DEATH OF DR. F. C. WAITE

F/ Frederick Clayton Waite (1870-1956) who was elected to honorary membership in A.A.H.D. in 1954, died March 30, 1956. He had a Ph.D. degree from Harvard University and was an active member of the faculty of Western Reserve University from 1906 to 1940.

Dr. Waite was author of several historical studies, especially of the health professions. He wrote a series of articles on the history of American dentistry, in the <u>American Dental Surgeon</u> for 1929, in which he advanced the thesis that American dentistry during the nineteenth century gradually separated from medicine of which it had been an integral part.